

ception, and that is, in most cases the congregations still require the sisters to wear the cap and bonnet, but even that part of the order has been entirely dispensed with in quite a number of the most prosperous congregations in the brotherhood, and the leaven is working rapidly. One by one many of their leading ministers are giving assent to the position we hold in the matter of dress, and many that a few years ago were sticklers for the "order," especially for the bonnet and cap for the sisters have experienced quite a change on that subject, at least their practice would warrant that conclusion. As an illustration I have in mind just now one of their ministers who very greatly deplored the course I pursued five years ago when I took the liberty to receive ladies by baptism without requiring them to promise to conform to the order of the church in regard to the wearing of the bonnet and "prayer covering," and who has within the last year made the same grievous departure. This minister has become the pastor of one of the strongest congregations in that entire fraternity and is located in an eastern city and within three hours' ride of Washington. I hope it will not be long until the same liberty will be enjoyed universally. If it is right to baptize ladies in Philadelphia without requiring them to lay aside their fashionable hats and adopt the bonnet and cap why not receive them in the same way in Washington City? Surely God is no respecter of places. Besides, if it is correct that the order is no longer a "test of fellowship," why not extend this privilege to all places alike? There are thousands anxiously waiting to have this privilege, and when it is once made universal, the "middle wall of partition between us" will be broken down, for after all it is this that has caused more trouble than all of the other points of difference put together. Now I hope that none of my German Baptist brethren or sisters will think that I have referred to these things excepting with feelings of kindness and love, and with the desire to do good. If my position is not in harmony with God's Word I am open to conviction and will receive correction kindly and gratefully. To discuss these things with the mind of the spirit should bring us closer together.

I close with this thought: The differences that exist between us are not on account of what is found in the gospel but that which is found on the outside. When Christ said on the cross, "It is finished," was it not enough? Where the Word is silent why should we speak? He is Alpha and Omega, the author and finisher of our faith. Let us rest our cause entirely with him, and he will give peace and not division and strife, and we will love even as he did.

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"I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care."

—John Whittier.

THE MISSION OF TRACTS

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I was converted to God thru the reading of a little tract. But this is not my only reason for believing in these messengers of truth. I have known of others who were led to Christ while in prison and out of it by the reading of a tract, and so I believe in the right use of tracts as an agency in extending the kingdom of God.

In my early life, altho I regularly attended the means of grace and read my Bible, I found my mind often clouded with doubts. In fact, the whole scheme of redemption, which is always dark to the natural man, was deeply involved in mystery.

Before I was twenty years of age I had occasion to meet a gentleman who was selling a sketch of his own conversion, published in tract form. As I was anxious to know the details of his life I ventured to buy a copy for a few pennies. I took it home and went aside and read it over carefully. As a result I was deeply impressed with my need of a Savior. I said to myself, if the Lord could save the man that wrote this tract, He can save me. The Spirit said, "Go thou and do likewise." The reasoning of the tract was so clear to me that I could not get away from it. Then and there I settled the question of my soul's salvation for time and eternity, and arose to my feet a redeemed man.

During the past century, no Christian agency has shown such marvelous results in extending the Master's Kingdom as careful and tactful tract distribution.

Millions of these little heralds of mercy are scattered abroad yearly to the four winds of heaven, and bring forth splendid results.

The only question that concerns me in the matter of tract distribution is the importance of using good sense. I have frequently followed the footsteps of tract distributors in prison, and at times I have been humiliated at the small amount of tact and judgment some of these persons have shown in handing out tracts and other miscellaneous papers which they have gathered. Just think of handing a poor tramp a tract on the sin of hoarding money, or thrusting into the cell door of a poor downcast and disconsolate prisoner a scientific or philosophical report or even a fashion paper. This is no fiction, for I have seen it done many times by persons who are not gifted with that useful quality known as "gumption."

Some people seldom read the tracts they hand around to their friends. If they would read intelligently the tracts that come into their possession, and then pass them around discriminately, certainly more results would come from tract distribution. If you have a tract on a boy's conversion, give it to a boy, and it is more than likely that he will read it, and get good out of it. Do the same with girls or young women; give them suitable tracts. If you are trying to reach a sol-

dier or sailor, give him something suitable in the line of his own calling.

Some people who put little faith in tracts think that the best way to fight the devil's legions is by the use of voluminous sermonic Long-Toms and theological Gatling guns. But this is a very grave mistake. These ponderous weapons have a place in Christian apologetics, but they are not read by the common people. Today our modern Davids in the strength of God go forth and slay great giants with pebbles of truth in tract form, which may well be called the sling-stones of faith.

These winged messengers of God go into all the earth, and are silent when insult and abuse or scorn are hurled upon them, but they do more effective work in spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ than whole circulating libraries. They do their work quietly for the Master, and reach hearts that would forever remain unreached were it not that they work in all possible ways so as to win their way to the soul.

Tracts sent by mail or dropped in unexpected quarters do a vast amount of good in extending the Kingdom of God all unknown to man. They work like the leaven in the meal.

Many years ago a little tract on the blood of Jesus was seen floating down a river in Scotland. An anxious inquirer after truth saw it and forthwith fished it out of the water. It was just what he was looking for, and God used it most effectively to his salvation.

An ungodly shoemaker found a tract inside the lining of an old boot which he was mending. God used it to send an arrow of conviction to his soul. He confessed his sins, turned to Christ Jesus, and was saved. The Spirit used the tract to do it.

A Philadelphia merchant used to put tracts in the goods that were sent all over the country, and always prayed over the paper missives before they were sent away with the goods. One little tract, sent with a bale of cotton to a town in Ohio, found its way into the hands of a village store keeper and his wife, and after reading it, both confessed Christ and became members of the church late in life.

Many years ago thru the generosity of a Christian lady of this city, I was enabled to scatter tens of thousands of small cards entitled, "Look to Jesus," and "Come to Jesus." I know that many a forlorn and downhearted man and woman found these, and were encouraged to live a new life.

What is prayer for? Not to inform God nor to move Him, unwillingly, to have mercy—as if, like some proud prince, He required a certain amount of recognition of His greatness as the price of His favor—but to fit our own hearts, by conscious need and true desire and dependence, to receive the gift which He is ever willing to give—but we are not always fit to receive.

—Alexander MacLaren.